

2ND MEETING-“THERAPEUTIC APPROACH”

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LECTURE 2:

Early Manifestations And Diagnosis II

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Diagnostic and evaluation procedure

- **Functionality and diagnosis, at early developmental stages**
 - **Diagnostic and evaluation procedure: Steps and tools**

used

- **The role of the interdisciplinary team in order to design the therapeutic plan.**

Country specific information

Outline

DESIRED LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Develop knowledge about the relationship between the person's diagnosis and their overall needs.
- Introduce the concept, frame and steps of diagnostic and evaluation procedures.
- Understand how the interdisciplinary team cooperates so as to design the individualised therapeutic plan.



Functionality in the Diagnosis of Individuals with Autism

- **Based on the criteria of DSM V, the functionality and support needs of the individual are imbedded in the diagnosis of ASD.**
- **In order for the clinicians to understand the level of functionality and identify the specific support needs of the person, it is necessary to get information about communication (does their child talk?) social interaction, daily living skills according to their developmental stage, adaptation to new situations, existence of repetitive movements, behaviours or interests, autonomy or dependence on others, carrying out daily responsibilities, sensory particularities etc.**
- **Defining the level of functionality and existing support needs of the person with autism will allow the professionals design an individualised therapeutical and support plan, adapted to the specific needs and preferences of the person and those of their family/carers.**



Functionality in the Diagnoses of Individuals with Autism

- In order to shape the therapeutic plan and identify the specific needs,, preferences, challenges and abilities of the person, tools such as the ***Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales), the Psychoeducational Profile - Revised (PEP-R)***, and other similar tools can be used by the clinicians.

Diagnosis-Evaluation

The diagnostic procedure should take place in an interdisciplinary environment , with the participation of experienced professionals in autism.

The diagnostic and functional evaluation procedure comprises several steps:

- 1. Obtaining an extensive medical, developmental and family history**
- 2. Direct systematic observation of the child and evaluation during play and other activities, including the school environment if applicable**
- 3. Use of standardized scales, tests, other assessment tools**



Tools for Diagnosis and Evaluation

- A. Self-reported questionnaires,
- B. Semi-structured interviews,
- C. Structured observation tools,
- D. Tools which focus on the identification of rehabilitation needs.



Interdisciplinary team I

Clinical Evaluation by Various specialties , ie pediatrician, child psychiatrist, developmental specialist, child psychologist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, special educator etc.)

- ✓ Diagnosis is announced to the parents / caregivers by the child psychiatrist or developmental pediatrician or child neurologist
- ✓ Treatment begins immediately after the announcement of the diagnosis. Therapeutic programs should start even in the absence of a definite diagnosis, targeting the specific needs and challenges of the child

Targets of treatment are set after receiving all the information by the evaluations, in collaboration with the family.

Treatment is “tailored” to the individualized needs of the child and the family.

Interdisciplinary team II

Collaboration of the **professionals of the interdisciplinary team** , *ie pediatrician, child psychiatrist, developmental specialist, child psychologist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, special educator etc.* **with the school, in order to:**

- 1. Observe the child at their natural environment , including school**
- 2. Collect valuable information from the teachers with respect to the child's specific support needs**
- 3. Provide information and support to teachers, in order to promote an integrated and coordinated approach to meeting the child's support needs.**

Interdisciplinary team III

Support provided to teachers is crucial, as:

- **Sometimes mental health issues are considered an object that does not concern the school, but the office of the specialist.**
- **Teachers are often not aware nor familiar with modes to support integration and inclusion of children with ASD in the class environment.**
- **They might not be very familiar with the form and extent of cooperation required.**

Tools used in the diagnostic and evaluation procedures I

I.Detection tools: used by pediatricians and other professionals for raising the suspicion of autism, at various developmental stages and age, generally at or after 18-24 months.

- (M - Chat), usually used by pediatricians
- Autism Behavior Checklist
- Autism Spectrum Quotient

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Tools used in the diagnostic and evaluation procedures II

2. Specific Tools used to assist the diagnostic procedure

- ◆ ADOS, from 12 months to adults
- ◆ ADIR, for parents

Diagnostic Interview for Social and Communication Disorders, DISCO

Diagnosis is made by the specialists based on their overall clinical evaluation and history and not merely based on the results of the diagnostic tools.

Tools used in the diagnostic and evaluation procedures III

3. Tools used to assess existing support needs, skills, abilities and challenges

- **Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ-HeI)**
- **Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales**
- **Leiter non-verbal intelligence test**
- **Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-V)**
- **Wechsler Adult Intelligence Test (WAIS)**

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